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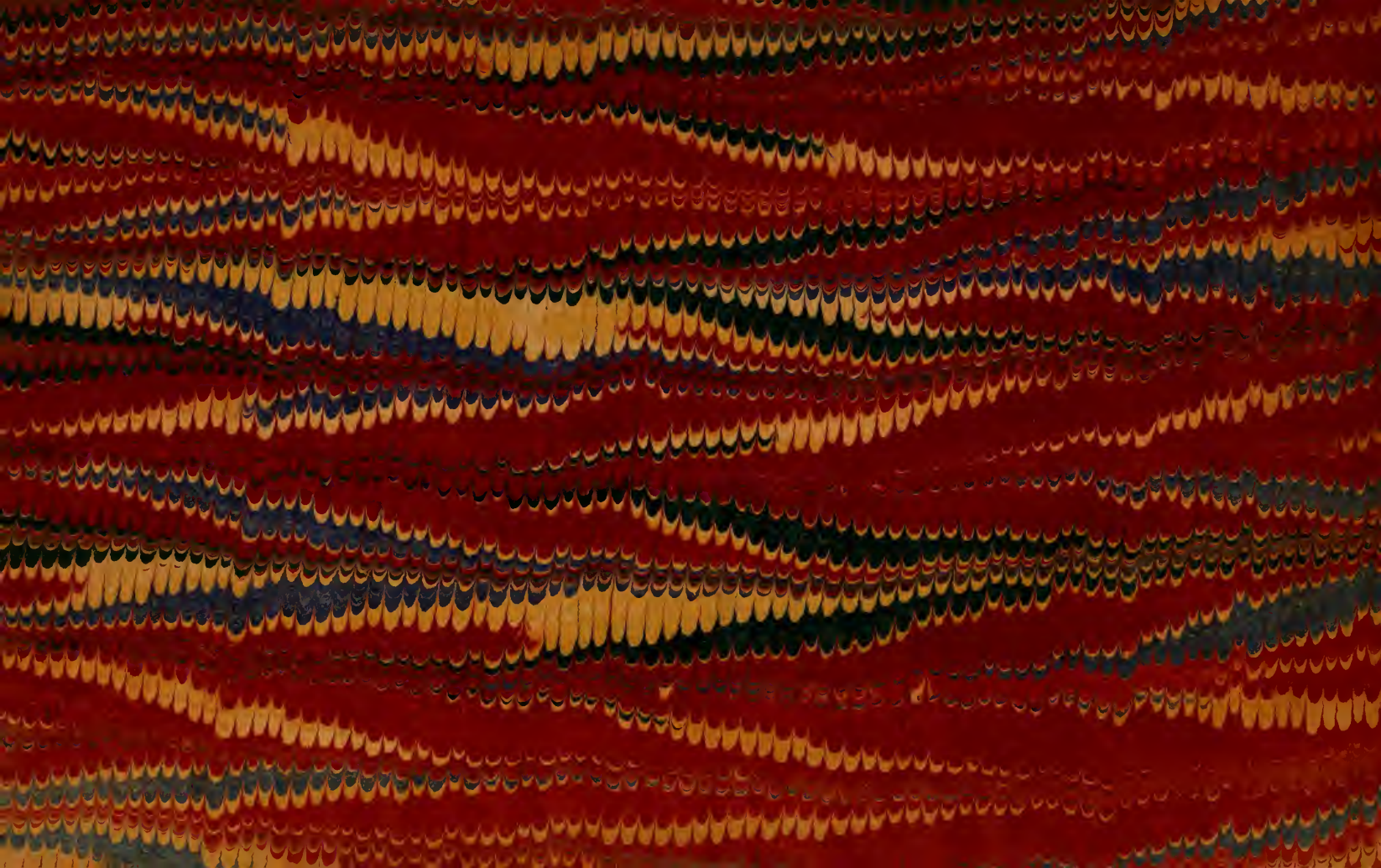

Bits of Verse
from Summer-Land

CHERRY-BLOOM

BY ELEANOR MARY LADD

WITH COVER DESIGN BY
STELLA HOLMES AIRD

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Clover says, 'twill soon be June,
Sunshine's wearing golden shoon;
Clover knows, her heart is red,
Minstrel bees hum round her head.

Falling Cherry Blossoms

Flitting flakes of petalled snow,
Fairy wings that come and go,
Petals white,
Falling bright,
In the tender morning light!
Flakes of snow,
I loved you so!
A fairy land you made
Of that old brown tree in the shade,
Where the fairies well
All the day did dwell,
In the moonlight,
In the sunlight,
When the dawn was red,
When the sunset fled.

Sweet miracle of spring!
With soft petalled wing,
My cherry blossoms white,
You stole upon us in the night;

A snow-white tent
Your petals unbent,
And Arabs fleet
With twinkling feet,
The Bedouins of the air,
In silence gathered there:
Their turbans white
All gayly bedight,
A glistening sheen
In the tender green,
Made the old tree young,
In the touch of spring.

Blooms of snow,
I loved you so!
Cherry blossoms, must you go?
My cherry blooms,
What sweet fate dooms
Your life to briefness,
Your days to sweetness?
Now you float upon the air,
Flitting, flitting, everywhere,
Flitting, flitting, flakes of snow,
Cherry blooms, I loved you so!

Swiftly to the light you go,
All the fairy flakes of snow;
In the drifting moonlight,
In the whitening starlight,
There you furl your wings so white,
Waiting for the spring-time fleet,
When she comes with loitering feet;
When she comes in brightness,
When she comes in lightness,
Sweeping through the winged air;
Then my old tree, once again,—
A marvel sweet to men,
A fairy crown shall wear.

How the Fairies Sup

Morning-glory, wet with dew,
Ah, the fairies slept with you!
Bend your cup and let me see;
Quick, their secrets tell to me;
Did they spend the night in sleep?
Did they drink from chalice deep?
Did they swing along the line
Of your laden blossom vine?
Dainty, purpling, Hebe's cup!
Now, I know how fairies sup.

Under the Apple-Blossoms

Does bluebird care for robin's lore?
Or ar'n't they neighbors any more,
Down where the apple-blossoms fall,
Over the tumbling, moss-grown wall?
When they on the rail-fence meet,
Do they not each other greet?
Or, Madame Robin, don't you care
For Mr. Bluebird's gallant air?
Robins and bluebirds, when they meet,
I wonder if they gossip sweet,
On the rail-fence; by the wall,
After the apple-blossoms fall.

Summer Currency

Dandelions in the grass,
Hold the gold that spring will pass
To the summer's wanton June,
Coming, coming, ah, so soon!

June will take each dandelion
With his golden helmet on,
Crown his head with feathery light,
Whiff it off some starry night.

Then she'll hide the yellow gold
In the daisy's petalled fold;
And the daises in the grass,
Current gold and silver pass.

The Lover Bee

Swaying by the garden walk
Stands the yellow hollyhock;
Stately, straight and proud and tall,
High above the garden wall.

Bumble-bee, bumble-bee, clumsy fellow!
Girdled and belted in shining yellow,
Rumbling and bumbling and tumbling so,
Buzzing and booming, and—there you go!

Why do you bend to my hollyhock queen?
You're making love, 't is plainly seen:
I've caught you now in my lady's chamber,
Where all the while you tried to clamber.

Tangled in the curtained line
Of the silken draperies fine,
How you buzz and fuss and kiss!
Not a secret shall I miss.

But you're such a clumsy fellow,
Kissing hollyhocks so yellow!
Now I hold you while you sing;
Lover bee! Why, how you sting!

Morning and Evening

Said the Lily to the Rose,
"Dost hear the sunrise bells?"
Can dewy lips disclose,
All the sunrise tells?
Still the Rose was bending low,
In her heart the sunset's fire;—
Can all that mortals know,
Touch to song that hidden lyre?

Said the Bluebird to the Bee,
"Dost hear the sunset chime?
Amber light is on the sea,
Sing the song of eventime."
Still the Bee was humming faint,
Murmuring secrets to the night,
Busy toiler's gentle plaint,
Echoes of the morning light.

In Rose-Time

A flush of green on meadows sweet,
A glow of sunshine at her feet,
A wealth of blue in summer skies,
The joy of life in brooding eyes,
And June, the queen of roses, stood,
In bloom of sylvan maidenhood.

Blithe hum the bees in blooming trees,
A rapture of birds on morning breeze,
Sweet scent of balm in all the air,
A thought of beauty everywhere;
Youth's lurking sense of life's completeness,
A joy in earth's pervading sweetness,
A flutter of leaves, a fall of dew,
And every waiting rose-soul knew
The mystic touch of radiant June,
The rhythm of Nature's chords in perfect tune.

"Where are my red, red roses sweet?"
Each sleeping rose-bud at her feet,
In hooded calyx green,

Tumultuous strife of glowing life,
Felt run along each swelling vein;
Took color and form in throbbing beat,
Each petal kissed to tender sheen,
By June's delicious heat.

"Swell, ruby heart, and spread thy petals out,
Part, dewy lips, and breathe thy fragrance out,
Thrill, root, and branch, and leaf of green,
Fling all your furlèd banners out,
And haste to meet your queen.

"My bursting buds, in waxen sweetness curled,
My fragrant Damask, rose of all the world,
My white, white rose, with dew impearled,—
Thy Raphael grace of Madonna face!—
Thy petalled prayer, now breathe upon air,
O sweet, your queen 'tis that calls!
Wake ere the dew falls.

"Thou too, my glowing Jacqueminot,
Not Eden's rose could thrill me so!
What secret dost thou keep
In crimson chalice deep?
How glows the blood-red wine
In that cool heart of thine!

"My dainty Rose of France, and gallant Marechal Niel,
My Tea-rose rare, beyond compare,
My chaste Moss-rose, in modest veil,
And thou, O wild Sweet-briar rose,
Your woodsy scent disclose;
In happy circumstance,
All join the dance,
And speed the golden hours,
Amid my summer bowers.

"My roses all, of palest tint, and richest hue,
Now burst your buds in sumptuous grace,
O heart of Nature's thought of flowers!
Thy bosom's glow, thy blushing face,
Now lift to sun and summer showers,
To evening's light and morning dew."

A glory of bloom on earth and air!
A rush of sweetness everywhere!
On the meadows low, by the streamlet's side,
In the mossy dell, by cool forests wide,
From the hillside, and the lawn,
From the sunny vale—in the limpid dawn,
By the cottage on the dusty street,
At the angle where the highways meet,
Roses answered all,
To June's melodious call.

Roses bloomed, roses gleamed,
Roses bowed in stately sweetness,
Roses blushed in rare completeness,
Roses smiled in modest primness,
Gayly flirted on the breeze,
Coyly peeped among the trees,
Nodded to each passer-by,
Nun-like roses lifted faces to the sky,
Roses flaunted and coquetted,
Stood in mystic grace,
With deep heart shut in dewy clasp,
Gave their sweetness to the air
Bathed in fragrant odors rare;
To the dance with vagrant wind consented,
On the maiden's lifted bosom rested;
On pulseless hearts, and silent,—
A bloom of life, amid the shadowed portent,
Roses in divine compassion,
Breathed to love the Savior's mission.

O joy of Nature's glowing noon!
O splendor of resplendent June!
Sweet Roses, so flitting and fleeting,
O rapturous chord of Nature's perfect tune,
Through the year's cycle, we wait for thy June.

The Answer of the Spring

One autumn day, I saw a sluggish thing,—
Instincts earth-born: 'twas slowly creeping,
Down where the wanton, mellow sunshine fell,
On leaf-strewn garden-walk, by the windlassed well.

I, musing, wondered, could it dream of soaring?
A bird's light shadow fell, on poisèd wing;
A pointed dragon-fly, a moment hung,
Where glistening lights their shimmer flung.

A sudden breeze swept, lightsome, through the trees;
It bore the scent of far-off seas:
A ripened peach hung o'er my head;
A hundred rosy dawns had made it red.

Poor sluggish worm! Can nature aught atone?
It never knew the scent on breezes borne,
Nor dreamed of wings;—the earth-bound thing!
Nor hears the wilding bee's loud clamoring.

But dulled, and slow, in the sunlit ray,
The brooding worm crept on its way,
Till in a little, sheltered nook it curled;
A cocoon spun; to hide from all the world.

'Tis best, I said, a kindly hand has led;
The winter snows shall hide its bed;
Why should the unwinged creature live?
'Twas better thus, to find a grave.

My parable, the spring-time told:
Could cocoon bonds, a creature hold,
That felt the stir of coming wings' wild play,
The piercing thrill of God's new day?

O butterfly, bending by the clover,
Enchanted, gorgeous, spring-time rover!
How did you slip that worn cocoon?
How did you know the year was nearing June?

The Rocky Mountain Anemone

Climbing up the mountain stair,
Under walls of convent, rare,—
Lifting blue eyes wide in prayer,
Dwells a nun of gentle grace:
Drooping, low, she hides her face,
And your footsteps almost tread
On the gray nun's sunlit bed.

Robed in gown of silver sheen,
Softest blues, and tender green,
Fair, this nun of modest mien;
Veil of gray and satin mist—
Softly tread! for there, I list,
Blooms this veiled maiden sweet,
In her cloister at your feet.

Pressing close to Nature's heart,
Where the grasses bend and part,
Free from every guile of art,
Little nun, so fair to see,—
Dainty, blue Anemone!
Lift to me your tender face,
Grant me this, a fleeting grace,—
Teach me, Sweet, thy wisdom too,
Foundling of the sun and dew.

Easter-Gladness

Bloom, ye flowers, for Easter-season;
Carol, birds, in joyful reason;
Hum, ye bees, in new found pleasure;
Ripple, brooks, in spring-time measure;
Sing, O earth, in pristine gladness;
Revel, airs, in joyful madness;
Lift your heads, O budding trees;—
Season of the world's heart's-ease!
Bloom and song have gracious meaning,
Lightsome airs are more than seeming,
Angels bend, in bright array,
Christ, the Lord, is risen to-day!

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